

## Right whale off Gurnet

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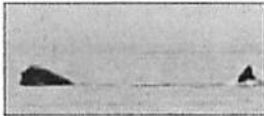
A right whale has been spotted off of Gurnet light at the tip of the Duxbury beach peninsula in Plymouth bay.

The whale has been seen between the Gurnet light and the Pilgrim nuclear power plant. "There has been one kind of hanging around for the last few days," said Duxbury Harbormaster Don Beers. "A research boat saw it and it was near the security zone for the power station." Beers isn't surprised the right whale is in the area because a few of these whales were spotted off Duxbury beach this spring.

"They are migrating back," he said.

More right whales have been seen in the Plymouth bay area more frequently and they are coming closer to shore where they feed on zooplankton and other tiny organisms, straining them through the baleen in their mouths.

Right whales, which can grow up to 50 feet long and weigh 70 tons, are the rarest of all whales



**A right whale at Duxbury beach last spring.**

File photo by Karen Wong.

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and were hunted almost to extinction by whalers who identified them as the "right" whale to kill. They were valued for their plentiful oil and baleen, which was used for corsets and buggy whips.

Today, right whales are an endangered species, and federal law prohibits boaters from approaching them within 500 yards. "You can't take a boat near a whale," Beers warned. "You have to stay well away from them."